

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Tulsa Centerless Bar Processing, Inc.

Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance

Tulsa Centerless Finds Focus

Client Profile:

Tulsa Centerless Bar Processing, Inc. began as a small grinding company in 1965 and now offers grinding, straightening, saw cutting, identification sandblasting and heat treating services for long bar products. The company also provides grinding services for a number of industries and products, including electronic motors, pumps, boat shafting, HVAC and aircraft. Tulsa Centerless Bar employs 40 people at its facility in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Situation:

Tulsa Centerless Bar Processing never wanted to turn away a job even though it meant spending a lot of time and energy on a product outside the company's realm of expertise. "We were trying to do everything ourselves and as a result were wasting a lot of effort," said company President, Evan Hudson. Hudson and his leadership team decided it was time for a change and contacted David Wheeler, a manufacturing agent with the Oklahoma Alliance for Manufacturing Excellence (The Alliance), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

Wheeler's first step was to assemble a leadership team to help lead Tulsa Centerless through its impending change. Five people in administration were the first to participate in the Lean 101 introductory class. As a result of the training, the company soon rearranged the location of 16 machines. It took about two weeks to reconfigure the machines and production time was cut in half. "We were able to cut our lead times and improve quality issues," said Hudson. "By making things run more smoothly we can concentrate on growing the business and not so much on the day-to-day operations. It allows us to meet our customers' needs for more value-added processes." "For years we were just reacting to day-to-day stimuli," he added. "We can now do more planning and are charting a course for the future."

One of those tools Tulsa Centerless is using to chart that course is a decision filter developed by Wheeler and David Woods, a former manufacturing CEO who works with companies on business strategy and long-term planning. "Tulsa Centerless got to a point that most companies reach; they had gotten so big and wanted to grow and were looking for their next point of growth," Woods said. Wheeler and Woods created a way for Tulsa Centerless to make decisions based on their company's roots and its basic DNA. "We helped the company create a method for growth that best fit its organization and created a strategy for controlling expansion," said Woods. The process has allowed Tulsa Centerless to be more focused on growth. Wheeler said, "Tulsa Centerless is doing a great job of transforming itself into a worldwide company. For a company that has 40 employees, they have taken on a lot and been quite successful at it. They are believers in the strategic planning process, and they do everything right. The growth of the company is evidence of that."

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Results:

- * Improved quality by 33 percent.
- * Reduced production time by 50 percent.
- * Achieved a more competitive and profitable position.

Testimonial:

"We have found a niche and are trying to fill the needs of our customers as well as we can. The Oklahoma Alliance for Manufacturing Excellence has helped us."

Evan Hudson, President